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The Catechumenate Goes Cursillo

Rev. Thomas J. Dove, C.S.P.

The Council The Liturgy and Christian Formation

Rev. William H. Shannon, Ph.D.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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IT SEEMS TO ME

Evolving Catechumenate

Leading convert centers in the U.S. are beginning to consider how to preserve our best current practice and to prepare for the liturgical catechumenate called for by the new liturgical constitution. Centers in France and missions in Africa have long experimented with promising approaches. Latest developments in this connection come from Africa where a successful catechetical study week, in September 1964, was conducted by Father Hofinger, S.J. Eight bishops were among the ninety in attendance, along with catechetical experts, who tried to chart a course to extend the catechetical renewal in the missions.

Four stages in the formation of adult catechumens were advocated. 1. *Preparation*. This would include making contact, engaging in dialogue, and influence to wean people from pagan, non-Christian attitudes and customs. 2. *The Proclamation of the Good News*. This stage culminates in a total commitment to Christ and a rejection of anything incompatible with this adherence. A liturgical celebration concludes this stage. 3. *The Catechumenate Proper*. This is concluded by baptism during the Easter Vigil. 4. *The Final Stage*. This completes the total initiation of the new Christian during the period between Easter and Pentecost.

Stress was laid on developing a sense of responsibility in the catechumens, the need to build up genuine Christian communities and to educate a Christian elite. The many-sided role of the sponsor was explored. And discussions on the need of adequate training of catechists made it clear that concern with content and methods applied also to priests and religious. A pastoral year for young priests, three or four years after ordination, was discussed. And annual catechetical sessions for older priests was advocated.

In restoring the liturgical catechumenate, the new constitution allows for wide variations dictated by local circumstances. But our own evolving catechumenate, while growing out of our distinctive experience, can learn from similar experiences elsewhere.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

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The

Catechumenate

Goes Cursillo

Rev. Thomas J. Dove, C.S.P.

A Promising Adaptation of the Inquiry Class

Adaptation is not something new in the Church. St. Paul expressed his feelings when he wrote: "And I have become to the Jews a Jew that I might gain the Jews; those under the Law, as one under the Law . . . that I might gain those under the Law . . . I became all things to all men, that I might save all." The Church, while always remaining faithful to principle, proposes us with striking examples of adaptation, as the Second Vatican Council brings forth. She does not change in her dogma nor her essential structure, yet she advances, and takes on new ways with her growth in the world, she makes progress.

St. Rose of Lima, a Paulist parish in Salt Lake City, Utah, has adapted the group dynamics method of the Cursillo into its Catechumenate Program. The venture began several years ago and is meeting with considerable success.

One of the problems in any Inquiry Class is to involve the people, to engage them in active participation. In the ordinary Inquiry Class, the priest gives a straight lecture and simply answers questions at the end of the class. Most of the people leave before the priest or his co-instructors have a chance to talk to them. It is not impossible

for a person to come to such a class and to slip in and out without really becoming known. This is practically impossible in the Cursillo type Inquiry Class.

Six weeks before the class was scheduled to start, the priest met with the head co-instructor to plan the publicity. The ordinary means of personal contact, letters to couples in mixed-marriages, interested non-Catholics and converts, newspaper articles and radio announcements were employed to acquaint the community with our project. A prayer campaign was fostered in the parish for the success of the class. Young married couples were asked to help as co-instructors. We found this created considerable interest among these co-instructors as they could frequently discuss their inquiries and compare impressions. If the husband or wife is unable to attend on a particular evening, the other partner reports on what transpired.

The week before the Inquiry Class began, a meeting of the co-instructors was held.

A talk given on Oct. 29, 1964, at a meeting of Paulist Fathers specially interested in developing an adult catechumenate: St. Paul's College, Washington, D.C.

At this meeting, the general method and their particular role was spelled out. The head co-instructor conducted the meeting. Before each class the co-instructors are expected to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament to pray for the success of the class. They should arrive well in advance of the inquirers. This gives the co-instructors an opportunity to become more personally acquainted with the people they are working with.

On the first night, the role of the co-instructor is to greet the people, and to make them feel welcome and at ease. They give the inquirers a catechism and a prayer card with the basic Catholic prayers. They also help the people fill out the registration form and try to meet ALL the inquirers.

Introductory Class

The first class is an introductory one. The physical set-up of the classroom is like a lecture hall — a desk for the priest and chairs for the people. This is the first and the last time the class will be burdened with a straight lecture in which no participation on their part is expected.

As soon as the first class is concluded, the co-instructors and the priest arrange tables for the following classes. Our seating arrangement does not separate "cradle" Catholics, converts and inquirers. Each table manifests a variety of persons differing in backgrounds, religious denominations, nationalities and races. However, partners in mixed-marriages and engaged couples are placed together. If a large clique comes, we have found it best to divide them and to assign them to different tables. The information received on the registration form is transferred to a check sheet used by the co-instructors at the proper tables. This check sheet contains all the information concerning the inquirers at a particular table, plus an attendance record. Two co-instructors are assigned to each table, and there are no more than ten persons, including the co-instructors, at each table. The head co-instructor is not assigned to any particular table, but left free to move about.

When the people arrive for the second class, the room is set-up with tables. Place-cards can be used, or people can sit at any place at an assigned table. At the beginning of the class the priest can check attendance by reading off the names at each table.

After the people have become settled, time is allowed for introductions and a chance to become acquainted.

One of the responsibilities of the co-instructor is to provide an adequate supply of pencils, paper and coloring materials. The class runs approximately one hour and a half. The lecture takes between forty-five minutes to an hour. This leaves a half hour for persons at each table to discuss the lecture; and then to write a group summary of the lecture and draw a poster. During the lecture, the people are encouraged to take notes and write down any questions which may occur to them.

After the lecture there is no real break. Refreshments are provided at the back of the room where people may be served at any time. Upon the conclusion of the lecture, the priest is free to move about and talk to the individuals in attendance. The co-instructors are advised *not* to dominate the discussions at their tables; their task is merely to draw people out. They try to help and to make suggestions but they remain part of the group effort.

Summary and Poster

The purpose of the summary is to put the main thought of the lecture into capsule form—a sentence or two is all that is needed. After people at a table have written their summary, they draw a poster expressing it. Some of these posters catch the doctrinal teaching admirably. A particularly good example of this occurred on the evening we discussed the Redemption. One group drew a simple picture of the sun shining down on a field of flowers. The caption read: "Without the sun there is no life; without the Son, man is dead."

The following week, the posters are hung on the walls of the classroom. These posters are saved and all are displayed for the last class; prizes are then awarded on the basis of art work, originality, greatest theological implications and the like.

The whole purpose of the summary and the poster is to get the people *INVOLVED*. When the groups have completed their summaries and posters, they are called on to explain them. At first a co-instructor may have to do this, but as self-consciousness diminishes, others are eager to oblige.

The co-instructor's role at the table is a

vital one. After a few weeks he should be well acquainted with members of his group. He volunteers to help them with their prayers and to accompany them to Mass. When problems arise, he reports them to the priest or the head co-instructor. He keeps attendance records for his table and checks on absentees, and he reminds them of the make-up classes. The success and tone of the table depends to a large extent on the co-instructor's interest in the individual — on being sincere without aggressiveness.

There are classes when we do not draw posters or write summaries, namely, the demonstration of the Mass, the class which ends with a tour of the church, and the class on the sacrament of Holy Orders and the Religious Life. At the last mentioned class, different Orders of Sisters are invited to talk on their life and vocation.

St. Rose is a parish in the heart of the Utah-Mormon stronghold. We have had people from practically every religious denomination, old people and teen-agers, Air Force personnel and laborers, school teachers and student nurses, housewives and technicians. Some seem a bit hesitant at first. But the relaxed atmosphere soon draws out even the shy, retiring type. They soon realize that to be part of the group they need to participate and get involved. Priests in neighboring parishes are now experimenting with this method.

There is nothing new in this technique. It is basically a form of group dynamics. First grade teachers have used it for years and the Cursillo has made it widely popular for adults. The advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. To begin with, the inquirer is not just another spectator. All are induced to listen, to think and to act as a

group! They realize that they have to produce something concrete at the close of the class. Besides, they meet others with perhaps the same personal problems, and they discuss solutions together. After a few classes, there is a keen sense of competition spontaneously aroused among the tables for originality and insight.

There are two possible disadvantages we might mention. First, in assigning strangers to definite tables, there is some danger of personality conflicts. Secondly, because interest is aroused, classes sometimes run longer than scheduled. But so far there have been no complaints on either score.

One other disadvantage — if you wish to call it that — is that there is more work for the priest than in the usual inquiry class. Briefing the co-instructors and preparing the classes takes extra time. You do achieve friendly contact with the inquirers sooner, however, and become involved in their personal problems almost immediately. Consequently more time is spent in private sessions and appointments than in the average Inquiry Class. The inquirer associates himself with you much sooner. While individual classes may be more time consuming, it is possible to cover the required material in fewer classes.

The possibilities of this group dynamics method are limited only by the inventiveness of the priest and co-instructors conducting the class. Plans for the future include greater use of the Liturgy, Bible readings, hymns, and classes conducted by the co-instructors. Perhaps others will find this adaptation of the Cursillo a remedy for one of the principal defects of the traditional inquiry class — lack of full participation on the part of the inquirers.

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LITURGICAL REFORM

Liturgical reform merely from the top down, renewal by juridical fiat alone, is not really likely to work . . . If we are going to ask limited human beings to participate in the Liturgy, then we must be content for a while with the imperfect participation we are going to get. Let us not make things worse by insisting that everything we attempt is at once 'perfect.' . . .

Thomas Merton

The Council, The Liturgy and Christian Formation

Rev. William H. Shannon, Ph. D.

"O, that today you would hear His voice!" Anyone who prays the divine Office regularly, or even occasionally, will recognize this verse from Psalm 94 as part of the invitation to prayer with which the Breviary begins each day. As we begin the prayer of the Church, we are reminded to listen for the accents of that divine voice, as God our Father speaks to us in the readings and the inspired prayers of the divine office. "O, that today you would hear His voice!" The older translation of this verse expressed the same meaningful sentiment in different words: "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

I am to speak to you on the significance of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy for the teacher in the Catholic School. I begin with this verse from psalm 94 because I believe that we must recognize in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy the voice of God our Father. We must see the Constitution as a Word of God spoken to us today.

For the God we worship is not a faceless God—without voice. Our God is a God who speaks to us, who communicates with us. He is a God who is never mute before His people. "In former times," the author of

the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, "God spoke to our forefathers in fragmentary and varied fashion through the prophets. But in this final age He has spoken to us in His Son." (Heb. 1:1-2) God's word spoken through the prophets finds its fullness in Christ. Jesus is God's full utterance of Himself. He is God's final Word to us; for in Jesus God has said everything: there is nothing left to say.

But what God has said to us in Jesus must be made contemporary in each age of the Church's existence. What God has said in Jesus must be heard by us in accents that speak to the twentieth century. This is the function of the Church—to make God's Word in Jesus the contemporary Word. The Church makes God's Word the contemporary Word in her Liturgy, where in Jesus speaks to us, as the Constitution expresses it, "at the table of the Lord's Word." (art. 51) and "at the table of the Lord's Body." (art. 48) Yet another way, especially meaningful to us today, that the Church makes God's Word the contemporary Word is through the teachings of an Ecumenical Council. For in the Council Jesus speaks to us through the college of bishops, joined with their Head,—the college of Bishops with whom He has promised to be even to the end of time. It is for this reason that a generation which experiences a General Council—and the Church in her long history has averaged

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only one a century and there have been centuries without councils—is a privileged generation. For it is a generation that hears God's Word spoken to its own age in accents that are unmistakably authentic.

We are such a privileged generation. The Second Vatican Council is now engaged in its third session. We need to listen closely to what God will be saying to us through the Council. We need especially to listen to what God has already said to us through the Council. For in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy we have received the first fruits of the Council. This document, promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963 in the name of his fellow-bishops is the most important document that the Church has given us in 400 years. Father Godfrey Diekmann has called the Constitution: "the most significant document issued by the Church in all the centuries of her existence." It is a great gift from our Bishops to us—a Word of God spoken to us through them. We must measure up to it in our thinking, in our living, in our teaching,—taking to heart the words of the psalmist: "O, that today you would hear God's voice!"

Theological Content

If the Constitution is to become central to our thinking, our living, our teaching, we must understand it for what it is. For the significance of this document lies, not in the directives that it gives (though these are of great importance), but in the theology that it teaches and the sweeping renewal of Christian worship that it envisions. It would be the gravest mistake, therefore, to see the Constitution simply as a series of "directives to be implemented." It is a deeply theological document. Breathing the spirit of the Scriptures and of the patristic writers, it opens up to us the mystery of the Church and the role of the Liturgy in the life of the Church. It helps us to see that the Liturgy must not be thought of as simply one of many things that the Church does. Rather *the Liturgy is what the Church primarily exists to do. The Liturgy is the Church at her existential best.*

Unfortunately, the ecclesiology that most of us have been taught has not prepared us for such a vision of the Church. We have grown up with an ecclesiology that devel-

oped out of the polemics of the Counter-Reformation. The very name that we gave to the course in which most of us studied the Church, Apologetics, suggests that our approach to the Church was more defensive than expository. It was an approach that emphasized one aspect of the reality of the Church—unquestionably, a valid and necessary aspect, but an aspect that never quite brought the Liturgy into proper focus. When we finished our course in Apologetics we had learned well the important truth: *Ubi Petrus ibi ecclesia* (Where Peter is, there is the Church). We had not learned so well the equally important truth: *Ubi Eucharistia, ibi ecclesia* (Where the Eucharist is, there is the Church). In a word, our study of the Church did not notably help us to see that the Liturgy is, in the words of the Council's Constitution, "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed, the fount from which all her powers flow." (#10)

A Sacred Sign

Most of us were taught an approach to the Church that was more juridical than sacramental. Our theological training inclined us to see the Church, not so much as a sacred sign of God's presence and activity in the world (and therefore the primal sacrament) but as a juridical entity viewed in terms of her external visible structure. This is the view of the Church which by and large we have communicated to the faithful; and this is the view which they have tended to retain, in spite of the efforts we may have made, say in the light of *Mystici Corporis*, to give them a deeper, more comprehensive look at the reality of the Church.

Thus if you were to ask almost any group of Catholics to make a list of the mysteries of faith that they believe in, I suppose that they would be in fairly general agreement on the mysteries they would include on their list: such articles of faith as the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Blessed Sacrament. It would be the rare Catholic, I think, who would include in his list of mysteries of faith, the mystery of the Church. They have learned well what we have taught them. For them the Church is essentially if not exclusively, an external hierarchical organization founded by Christ. Seldom

does their thinking go much beyond this.

Such concentration on the Church as an external organization easily begets an over-emphasis on the legal aspects of church-membership. The Church has certain laws which members, to be in good standing, must obey. All too frequently membership in the Church is equated with obedience to these laws; so much so that with the community at large one seems to be sufficiently identified as a Catholic if he is a Friday-meat shunner and a Sunday church-attender. Behind such a mentality lurks the ever-present danger of legalism—a danger to which, as St. Paul learned centuries ago, Christians seem all too ready to succumb.

People of God

Thinking of the Church as an hierarchical organization exposes a Catholic to the very strong temptation of identifying the Church with the hierarchy. Actually much of our Apologetics has been almost wholly occupied with a defense of the role of the hierarchy and the clergy—to the almost exclusive neglect of the roles of the rest of God's people in the Church. Is it any wonder, then, that the laity tend to think of the Church as a clerical thing—which they support and to which they go at various times to receive certain important, though intangible benefits?

Thinking of the Church as an organization founded by Christ—and emphasizing this truth apart from the total context of the reality of the Church—opens the way to the temptation of thinking that the Church, being Christ's, can do no wrong, can make no mistakes. This is the danger of forgetting the human element of the Church and falling into a false attitude of triumphalism.

Legalism, clericalism, triumphalism—this triple temptation to which we are exposed if we think of the Church simply in terms of her external structure—were the three terms used by Bishop De Smedt of Brouges in rejecting the schema on the Church that was originally proposed to the Council Fathers, rejected by them and sent back to committee for revision.

The Church is an organization. It has an organizational structure. This in its basic outlines is from Christ. It is important. But to think that the Church is only this

or to act as if the Church were only this, though knowing otherwise—is to lose sight of the essence of the Church. We are coming to realize more and more that the Church is a mystery—a mystery that is not easily susceptible of definition in terms of scholastic categories. As Pope Paul has said recently:

"The Church is an immense and complex reality which we are unable to circumscribe by the terms of a hasty definition."

Again, to quote the Holy Father:

"The Church is a mystery; she is a reality imbued with the divine presence, and, for that reason, she is ever susceptible of new and deeper investigation." (opening address to 2nd session of Council, September 29, 1963)

No matter what has been said about the Church, there always remains something more to be said about this mystery of God's presence in the world in a covenanted people.

A Pilgrim Church

For the Church is nothing other than the prolonging of the mystery of Christ in human history. It is His Body, His mysterious extension in the world. It is the community of the people of God made new creatures by God in Christ. It is the community of those who have found in Christ a new relation to the Father and to one another. The Church is a pilgrim Church; it is redeemed humanity united to Christ, yet a redeemed humanity that is continually falling back into a state of unredeemption. That is why Pope Paul could say, in opening the second session of the Council last September, that we humbly ask pardon of God and of others for whatever responsibility we have for the disunity of Christendom. That is why Nietzsche could say, cynically but with truth, "If Christians want others to believe in their Redeemer, they will have to look more redeemed."

This community of the people of God, called to dignity which they do not always live up to, is a sacramental community. It is a sacramental community, first, because it is brought into being by sacraments (Baptism and Confirmation) and nourished by sacrament (the Eucharist); and secondly, because it is a sign of God's presence in the world, a sign of God's love made

visible in a people whom He has called to sonship by engrafting them onto His Son.

This sacramental community of the People of God exists permanently but it achieves its highest actuality in the celebration of the Eucharist, in the Eucharistic Assembly. The Church is most perfectly herself at worship.

This Eucharistic Assembly is always the celebration of the whole community. Hence all should take an active part. Each should fulfill his proper role. Some members of the community have special powers and functions. They can do for the people of God what other members of the community cannot do. Most important, they make the Eucharist possible. But the Eucharistic celebration which they make possible is not their celebration, but that of the whole community. Their powers are ministerial powers. They are to minister to the needs of the people of God. Their powers exist, not primarily for their personal benefit, but for the service of the community. The Mass is something given by God, not simply to the priest as his greatest privilege, but to the whole Church whose members, by Baptism, share in a "royal priesthood."

Nor are we to think of the Eucharistic assembly as a group of isolated individuals coming together for a few brief moments. It is rather an assembly called by God of men and women united in Christ. The literal meaning of the Greek word *Ekklesia*, which we translate as "church" is precisely that: an assembly, a calling together. Indeed, the building which we now call by the name "church" was, originally, the *domus ecclesiae*, the house of the assembly. So the Eucharistic assembly in our parishes means that Christians dispersed throughout the week, in their homes, at their jobs, come together in this assembly which visibly expresses and effectively produces and deepens their unity—with Christ and with one another in Him.

The assembly is an act of collective worship culminating in an act of communion, in which the union of the whole Church with Christ and of every member of the Church in Him with every other member is brought into act and thereby deepened and strengthened.

For in the liturgical action we gather as God's people to do something together: to

praise God through Christ, with Christ and in Christ. We pray together. We sing together. Together we listen to God's Word. Together we offer Jesus to the Father. Together we eat the Bread which is Jesus at the family table. And our assembly becomes at once a sign of our unity with one another in Christ and the cause that produces that unity. If we really understand what we are doing in this Eucharistic action, we embrace each person in this community and love him as a brother in Christ.

Apostolic Task

Then this Eucharistic assembly, in which we take one another to our hearts, concludes with the *Ite Missa est*. And if we, priests and people, have participated properly in the Mass—experiencing in the common Action we do together the fatherhood of God and the fact that we are brothers in Christ, the *Ite Missa est* rings out as a challenge to live the implications of that brotherhood, to be filled with a sense of community in Christ, to become involved in the apostolic task of bringing to all men an understanding of the Good News of what God has done for us in Christ. In this way the Liturgy becomes for us what the Constitution says it must be: "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed, the fount from which all her powers flow." (#10)

The mystery of the Church, then, is a many-splendored mystery. It means many things. No one definition can exhaust the meaningfulness of what the Church is. But at its deepest level the reality of the Church means especially the worshiping community. This is what the Constitution is telling us when it says:

The Liturgy . . . is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church. (#2)

To deepen our own awareness of this dimension of the reality of the Church and to communicate this awareness in all its beauty to our students—this is the chief task of our liturgical apostolate. We need to look especially, I think, at our Sunday Mass. Why do our people come? Why do our students come? When they come, what

do they see? What do they experience? Do they come to take part in a total human experience which speaks to their head and their heart, an experience which makes their faith come alive? Or do they come to fulfill a duty? Does the worshiping community come alive for them in all its glory? Do they discover themselves at Sunday Mass as God's people? Do they find Christ in the Book and in the Bread and in finding Him find one another in Him? Do they know at Sunday Mass that this is the Church, and know it not simply because faith tells them that it is, but because in sacred sign, they really see the Church: see her at her best, see her doing what primarily she exists to do?

Encounter with God

These are questions, I think, that we must face; and in facing them we can draw courage from the fact that our Fathers in Christ at the Second Vatican Council have already faced them, honestly and frankly. And because they were not satisfied with the answers they came up with, they have given us, in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, a magnificent document, in which they have not only clarified for us what the Liturgy should be in the life of the Church, but also have prescribed a wholesale re-education of priests and people and an extensive reform of liturgical rites and practices—all directed to make the Liturgy become once again for God's people what should never have ceased to be: their personal encounter with God in the worship which the whole Mystical Body gives to Him.

One does not have to read very far into the Constitution to see that it is the pastoral tone that predominated and the needs of the faithful that are everywhere its concern. With a singleness of purpose from which it never swerves, the Constitution insists that the mysteries of our redemption must be celebrated in a meaningful way, that "all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy" and which the faithful are entitled to by reason of their baptism. (#14)

Everything prescribed in the Constitution must be read in the light of this basic

goal: the active participated Mass, celebrated by a community of God's people who are fully aware of what they are doing; (#11), must become the normal Mass—everywhere. Everything contained in the Constitution by way of directive is intended to serve this single purpose. Whatever the obstacles to fulfilling this, they must be eliminated. Whatever the means to achieving this goal, they must be utilized.

To achieve this goal which they have set, the Fathers of the Council have decreed that changes must be made in the liturgical action itself—so that that action will speak to the minds and hearts of the participants in a language of word and sign that will communicate to them the reality of what the Liturgy is and what they are doing when they engage in the Liturgy. There is great need for such changes: for too long a time the faithful have thought of the liturgy in terms, not of what it is, but what it effects, not of what they do, but what is done to them. Our post-Reformation theology, emphasizing the causality of the sacraments, has tended to minimize the sign-aspect of the sacraments. We need to make clear that the sacraments are not only causes of grace; they are also signs of the grace they produce. In the words of the Constitution:

In the Liturgy the sanctification of man is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs. (#7^b)

Expressive Signs

The sacramental rites are intended to speak to us, to instruct us, to tell us what Christ is doing in the sacrament—so that we may make the appropriate response.

It is such a restoration of greater meaningfulness to the sacramental sign that the Council Fathers desire. Hence the reforms which they have ordered—and they use the word "reform" without being self-conscious about it or afraid of it—are based on this fundamental sacramental principle: *the Liturgical rites must not only produce what they signify; they must clearly signify what they produce.* The Council Fathers, very much aware that the Mass and the sacraments belong to the category of signs, want them to be good signs—genuine signs

—signs which truly say what they are supposed to say. Consider a simple example of what I mean: the water of Baptism is a sign of new life. Yet all too often Baptism means pouring on a person's head a few drops of scummy, stagnant unsanitary water. Is this a sign that speaks to us of new life? Is it genuine? Significantly the Constitution on the Liturgy (in art. 70) has suggested that Baptismal water may be blessed within the rite of Baptism itself by an approved shorter formula. Such a formula is contained in the new Ritual that has just been published.

Someone has said that it is almost a definition of the Liturgical Movement to say that it is an effort to restore the sincerity of sign. The Constitution, in making the Liturgical Movement a movement of the Church herself, seems to agree. Thus, article 21 says:

In this restoration (of the liturgy) both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify. (#21)

The same article continues:

The Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively and as befits a community. (#21)

Thus the sacramental principle, restoring the genuineness of sign, becomes also a pastoral principle. For if the sign is genuine, people will more readily understand what it says and, therefore, be able to participate more fully, more actively and more meaningfully.

Genuineness of sign is the ultimate reason for the introduction of the vernacular languages into the Liturgy. For language is the basic element of the sacramental sign. One of the rights guaranteed by the Declaration of Rights of the United Nations is the right to one's own language. This ought to be a right of God's people too, when they speak to Him.

The Constitution handles the language question in five separate articles. Article 36 is a general statement of principle regarding the use of vernacular languages. Article 54 deals more specifically with the Eucharist; article 63 with the other sacraments and the sacramentals; article 101 with the divine Office; and article 113 with sacred music.

There is not sufficient time to discuss these articles in detail; but in general it may be said that they permit a widespread use of the vernacular, without however prescribing the amount of vernacular to be used. The Constitution indicates what may be done. It is left up to the Bishops, and especially to territorial bodies of Bishops to legislate, in the light of their judgment of the needs of their people, how much of the vernacular language will actually be used.

The Bishops of the United States, meeting in Rome last December after the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, announced that they would enact legislation for the United States that would permit the maximum use of the vernacular allowed by the Constitution. At their meeting in Washington Easter Week of this year, the Bishops enacted such legislation.

Decisive Step

Their decree—unique in that it represents the first piece of legislation given to us by our Bishops since 1885—received approval from Rome in May of this year. By now the contents of their decree has become generally known. In fact, part of it has already gone into force. Since September 14, it has been permissible to administer the sacraments and the sacramentals in the vernacular—and there are no restrictions. The entire rite—including the essential form—may be performed in English.

That part of the Bishops' decree which affects the celebration of Mass will go into effect on the first Sunday of Advent. Beginning November 29, then, in all Masses celebrated with the People, the vernacular may be used in:

1. the ordinary dialogue responses
2. the lessons—the epistle and Gospel
3. the prayer of the faithful—which is to be restored and will be in the vernacular when it is available.
4. the people's chants and prayers: i.e., the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Creed, the Sanctus, the Agnus Dei and the Domine non sum dignus.
5. The proper chants and songs: the introit, the gradual, the offertory chant and the communion chant.

This concession does not include the vernacular for the priest's prayers: both his

private prayers (i.e. the prayers at the foot of the altar, the offertory prayers, the orate fratres and its response which is for the ministers and not for the people) and his "presidential" prayers, i.e., the prayers that he says as the head of the assembly: namely, preface—canon, the collect, the secret and the post-communion prayers.

Since the collect, the secret and the post-communion prayers, while said by the priest, are said in the name of the people, many would like to see these prayers in the vernacular. The Bishops of the United States, if they so wished, could at some future time make such a request. Such requests have already been made by and granted to Bishops in other English-speaking countries, for example Canada and Australia. Indeed many people feel that the beginnings which we shall make on the first Sunday of Advent are but a prelude to a more extensive use of the vernacular in the Mass—which will lead in due time to an entirely vernacular Mass.

Difficult Transition

The fairly extensive use of the vernacular in the Mass, already decreed by our Bishops, will demand of our people a change in their customary way of assisting at Mass. We may have to face the problem of weaning them away from an excessive dependence on the Missal.

Up to now the Missal has been a practical necessity for a layman wishing to participate actively and meaningfully in the Mass. Going to Mass heretofore has been somewhat like going to a foreign movie with the subtitles dubbed in. Without these subtitles, we see the action of the movie, but we do not understand the words which interpret the action.

Up to now the Missal has dubbed in our own language for us. In the very near future we shall not only see the action, but in many parts of the Mass we shall hear the words and respond to them in our own language. We shall talk to God in the same language that we talk to one another in. That is why I say there will be less need to be dependent on the Missal. For when we hear and understand what we hear, it becomes less necessary to read. Reading in fact can distract, as English subtitles would in an English movie.

There is danger that our people, having become attached to their Missals may want in the future to use them to the same degree that they have used them in the past. A generation before us objected to the Missal because they wanted to say their prayers at Mass. It may be that our people will object to more participation in the Mass because they want to say the prayers in the Missal. There is danger that they may clutch their Missals as a generation before them clutched their prayer-books. We shall have to teach them (and perhaps some of us will have to learn the lesson ourselves) that the Mass at the altar is far more important than the Mass in the Missal. The closer we can bring them to that action physically, mentally, spiritually, vocally—the more perfectly will we be helping them to fulfill their role in the Mass.

Change by Stages

The Council Fathers, then, have decreed an extensive reform of the liturgical action. Many of these reforms will go into effect immediately; others will have to await the reform of the liturgical books—which is now in the hands of a post-Conciliary Commission. The Council Fathers are realistic; however; they are well aware that so complete a change in habits of worship—such as the Constitution contemplates—cannot be achieved over-night or without struggle and careful planning. Indeed, changes in ritual and language will ultimately be fruitless, unless they are accompanied by a change of mind and heart in the participants of the liturgical action—the priests and the people. That is why the Constitution, aiming as it does at a renewal of Christian worship that will bring Christians meaningfully to the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian life stresses everywhere two aspects of this renewal:

1. the promotional, instructional aspect
2. the aspect of reform and change. The work of reform is in the hands of a post-Conciliary Commission. We shall have to wait five years, perhaps more till their work is finished—although we may expect that some items of the reform will be released gradually before the total reform of the liturgical books is completed.

But whereas the work of reform is in the hands of the post-Conciliary Commission, the other aspect of liturgical renewal, promotion and instruction is in our hands. Changes and reforms in the liturgical rites will mean little unless, when they come, they are accepted by priests and people who have been ready for them by proper instruction. This is our responsibility now, and the Council has told us so in no uncertain terms.

With special earnestness the Council directs its attention to the education of the clergy. The study of Liturgy in Seminaries and religious houses of studies is discussed. It is to be ranked among the compulsory and major courses and to be taught by professors who are specially trained. Gone are the days when the study of Liturgy meant simply the study of rubrics.

Not only are there to be major courses in Liturgy, but life in Seminaries and religious houses must be "thoroughly influenced by the spirit of the Liturgy." (17) Clerics in Seminaries and houses of religious are to be given "a liturgical formation in their spiritual life." (17) This would suggest the need of a great deal of rethinking of their work on the part of spiritual directors of Seminarians and novices and also a rethinking of retreats for priests and religious.

Informed Clergy

The Council Fathers also provide for the post-service training of priests, both secular and religious, "who are already in the Lord's vineyard." They "are to be helped by every suitable means to understand ever more fully what it is that they are doing when they perform sacred rites." (18) This instruction of the clergy, which would include conferences, lectures, discussions, is for their own personal spiritual growth; but so that they may communicate this understanding to the faithful. "They are to be enabled to live the liturgical life and to share with the faithful entrusted to their care." (18)

The Constitution does not address itself specifically to the responsibility of teachers other than Seminary professors, to the liturgical apostolate. But what is said about the teaching that is to be given in the Seminary and the liturgical formation that is to

be imparted there, can certainly be applied, with proper modifications, to the teaching and Christian formation that we are endeavoring to give in Colleges, High Schools and elementary schools.

This means that the study of the Liturgy must not only constitute a major area of concentration in our religion courses; it must also be the chief integrating factor in these courses. More and more the instruction and formation of our students must be centered upon the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation, celebrated and made present in the sacred Liturgy.

I should like to make a few brief suggestions about our teaching of the Mass and the sacraments:

Communal Action

In teaching the Mass we must stress the community nature of Christian worship. We must help our students to see that the Mass is not something done by the priest, which the congregation follows (this is the unfortunate impression that is given by many Missals). We must bring them to understand that the Mass is an action done by a community—in which the priest is the leader, but in which the congregation also has its role to play. The liturgical assembly must be seen as a genuine sign of the reality of the Church—a holy people made up of many members with a plurality of function. This communal character of the Liturgy the Constitution insists on in articles 26-32.

But the Constitution is a well-balanced document. While it stresses the superior dignity of the Liturgy, pointing out that it "is a sacred action surpassing all others," (7) nevertheless it makes clear that the spiritual life "is not limited solely to participation in the Liturgy. The Christian is indeed called to pray with his brethren, but he must also enter into his chamber to pray to the Father in secret." (12)

What I mean to say is this: our liturgical apostolate must make clear the relationship of liturgical prayer to private prayer and to popular devotions. We have no thought of ignoring the personal confrontation which each Christian must make with the All-Holy. We are not attempting to tamper with that personal Amen that each of us must say to God's Word. We

are not trying to submerge individuals in a faceless mob whom we are now piously calling the people of God. On the contrary, our effort to give the liturgy its proper place of primacy means, if anything, heightening the dignity of the individual Christian by helping him to find himself in the holy community—that community in which God knows him by name. Community action is not intended to depersonalize worship; on the contrary, to be genuine, it must be intensely personal and individual; requiring strong faith and deep love in each of its participants.

Missal and Ritual

A second and final suggestion: In teaching the Mass and the sacraments, we should make extensive use of the Missal and the Ritual (All teachers should have available for their use a copy of the new Ritual). There are many books we can go to for help in teaching the Mass and the sacraments. But these books, helpful and necessary as they are, are the work of human teachers. The liturgical books give us a higher dimension of teaching. For in the liturgical books we find what Christ our Lord and the Church are teaching us about these sacred rites. For the Liturgy is the worship of God, it is a source of holiness for men; but it is also instruction. In it God speaks to His people. Christ continues to proclaim His Gospel. The Liturgy teaches through signs and symbols, through words and deeds, through material things. Failure to use the Missal and the Ritual extensively in our teaching of the Liturgy would be to neglect a most important instructional help—the help given to us by Christ Himself and the Church from whom we receive the sacramental sign.

The Liturgical Movement has come a long distance since the day some sixty years ago when Pius X called for a reform

of the Liturgy and a return to active participation in the Liturgy as the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit. Much has happened in these sixty years. Sometimes there were dark days for those who wished to implement the words of the Pope. There were times when zeal for the promotion and renewal of the liturgy were greeted with suspicion and those who displayed such zeal were almost under a cloud. The Council Fathers have lifted this cloud once and for all. The implications of article 43 of the Constitution are unmistakable. It says:

Zeal for the promotion and restoration of the Liturgy is rightly held to be a sign of the providential dispositions of God in our time, as a movement of the Holy Spirit in his Church. (#43)

It is in the light of these remarkable words of the Constitution that I ask you to let your memories go back to the spring of 1962. Preparations were being made for the Council that was to open in October. Pope John XXIII composed a prayer that he asked us to say for the success of the Council. In this prayer, which we all said many times, we asked that the Holy Spirit “prepare our hearts for obedience so that the deliberations of the Council might find in us a generous response and a prompt fulfillment.”

Our Response

Now is the time to make good the sentiments which we expressed in saying that prayer. The Constitution on the Liturgy is the first wonderful result of the deliberations of the Council. May it find in us that “generous response” and “prompt fulfillment.” The Constitution is truly a Word of God spoken to us today. We must take to heart the words of the psalmist: “O that today you would hear His voice!”

■ ■ ■

Books Received

salvation History (An Introduction
to Biblical Theology).

Seal M. Flanagan, O.S.M.

Sheed and Ward. \$5.00

Father Flanagan's purpose is to give neither a commentary on the entire Bible, nor an exhaustive treatment of any section, but a primer of biblical theology, centered on the one theme of *Man's Salvation*." The author's scholarship is attested by his long studies and writing for erudite reviews. But he puts all this learning at the service of the average Catholic. The general plan and chapters of this volume were first worked out in lectures to African nuns and lay catechists, to university students and to various religious in Ireland and America.

In part one, the author discusses the "Old Testament Preparation for Salvation" and, in the second part, the "New Testament Gift of Salvation." Early in the book, he clarifies the notion of literary forms and then proceeds to show how the Bible tells the true story of God's love for sinful man. With a brevity that does not sacrifice anything essential, he discusses the great figures of the Old Testament, the significant events in God's dealings with Israel, and the enduring themes by which God's self-revelation prepared for the coming of the Word Himself.

One of the merits of this book is its emphasis on the continuity between the old and the new dispensation. The personal revelation of God's saving love — from Abraham to the Macabees — emerges clearly in its immediate blessing, but even more as partial fulfillment of a rich promise. Moses, Exodus, sacrifice, prophesy are clearly linked with the New Moses, the paschal mystery, Eucharist and the life of God's New People.

The author has gathered some of the best findings of contemporary scholarship in biblical theology, and presents it in a clear, smooth, easy style.

The Challenge to Change

Francois Houtart

Sheed and Ward. \$4.50

Abbe Houtart is the well-known, widely-traveled Director of the Center for Socio-Religious Research in Belgium. This book is based on lectures he delivered for a Marquette University Workshop at the invitation of the Sister Formation Conference. It is extremely fortunate that the observations and insights of this able sociologist have been made more widely available.

If it is essential for every Catholic to understand the changes and modifications inspired by Vatican II, it is scarcely less necessary to grasp the new world that has made these changes imperative. Within the limitations of a small book, the writer packs an immense amount of significant information and relates it to the mission of the Church in our own day.

Few people are unaware of the novel characteristics of our technical civilization. But the author shows us the *significance* for humanity and the challenge to Christ's Church posed by factors like socialization, rapid change, mobility, specialization—and the influence of the media of mass communications. It is something "new," completely so. And it is an inescapable challenge to the faith, charity and native talents of every Catholic. Father Houtart charts our collective responsibilities, but he also suggests the specific obligations of the parish, priests, nuns and laity.

Workers in the convert apostolate will be particularly enlightened by his discussion on religious statistics and missionary activity. The population explosion forces us to recognize that "we are living in a world where we are becoming a smaller minority. This fact is calling forth some new and challenging questions with regard to the concept of the Church's mission in the world." He does not counsel less mis-

sionary activity. But he suggests that our past concern with numerical gains was too simplistic, urges more concern with the *quality* than with the quantity of conversions, and questions some of the means we employ.

Pastoral Catechetics: Edited by
Johannes Hofinger, S.J. and
Theodore Stone.
Herder and Herder. \$4.95

Evidence mounts daily to indicate that the blessings of the Vatican Council will be welcomed by Catholics in direct proportion to their degree of preparation. This is what makes good preaching and good catechetics of such inestimable importance.

This book is one more proof of the steady, healthy advance of the new catechetics in our country. In fifteen significant essays, each by an eminent authority, can be found the latest and best thought on the principal aspects of the nature of the Christian message and its proper transmission. It should be read by all who teach religion at any level. But it can be read with interest and profit by any Catholic — especially those whose Christian formation leaves much to be desired.

The Chapters fall into three sections: God meets man in the bible, liturgy, witness and doctrine; man's response to God with living faith; and the elements in the training of all who proclaim this saving message.

Workers in the convert apostolate will particularly enjoy the papers on "Living Faith" by Alfonso Nebreda, S.J.; "Stages Leading to Faith" by Johannes Hofinger, S.J.; and "Theology and the Catechetical Renewal" by Bernard Cooke, S.J. But all the chapters are excellent, each with its precious insights into the art of handing on the Good News in our day.

The Word: Readings in Theology
Compiled at the Canisianum, Innsbruck.
Kenedy. \$4.95

The American students at the famous Austrian university here give us another collection of outstanding papers on various aspects of God's Word. Like its predecessor (on the Church) the writers include some of Europe's most distinguished schol-

ars. The book will be of special interest to priests and seminarians, yet many catechists and lay people could find it enormously rewarding.

Part one gives a general introduction to the topic; part two views the subject in the light of scripture and the Fathers; the word and preaching is treated in part three; and the concluding section is concerned with the effects of God's Word. Father R.A. MacKenzie, S.J., writes a helpful introduction.

God's Word is the primary and most fundamental of His many gifts and central to the entire Christian mystery. Announced by the prophets, made incarnate in Christ, it is transmitted by preaching, catechizing and in the witness of Christ's members.

The editors ranged far and wide to find and select the able contributors represented here on one of the liveliest topics in contemporary theology. They are to be highly commended for their fruitful search and the high quality of the translation.

GUIDE

- A publication of the Paulist Institute for Religious Research.
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GUIDE

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Guide Lights

DECLINE IN CONVERSIONS . . .

The search into the whys and wherefores of the decline in conversions continues. Broadening the picture so as to include some more factors suggests that ecumenism is a lesser villain than some of us once thought. Recently, two relevant considerations have been offered to explain the declining returns on our missionary activity. They are: Catholic self-criticism and invalid marriages.

The ongoing program of self-criticism which is so characteristic of Catholic writing these days is undoubtedly confusing to non-Catholics as it is to some Catholics. There must be many potential converts who have been accustomed to think of the Catholic Church in black and white terms. Now they read in popular magazines about all the things Catholics find wrong with their church, and to someone who is not completely familiar with Catholic faith and psychology, it sometimes must seem as though the Church is on the verge of collapse. It is a fact that some inquirers are attracted to the Church by the certitude in faith and morals they see there. Now, with the searching questions that are being asked within the family, this simplistic image of the Church is changing, and this may be causing this type of inquirer to hold off a bit. Others, whose reading about the Church is limited to critical essays may see the Church with head bloody as well as bowed, and this could repel some.

I am not suggesting that we ought to declare a moratorium on such criticism because it may be scaring some people off from the Church. This self-searching is long overdue and, if followed through, will unquestionably prove of immense benefit. However, I do think that we have to face the fact that part of the price of renewal may well be a short term fall off in conversions and that it will probably get worse before it gets better. Hopefully, we can expect that in the long run there will be a great increase in the number of conversions as Catholic renewal cuts through some of the institutions and practices which have so long concealed the authentic face of the Church. We have often defended practices irksome to ourselves.

INVALID MARRIAGES . . .

Father John Mahoney of Moberly, Mo., suggests another reason for the decline, viz., invalid marriages. Every pastor knows that here is a statistic that is moving in the other direction. Not only are the Catholics in this category increasing so that bad marriages are perhaps the parochial problem, but now it seems that we are losing a lot of potential Catholics because of this unhappy situation. Certainly in our information centers it is now routine to expect a couple of invalid marriages among the inquirers in any class, to say nothing of those who have a record of previous marriages. This may not be as common in the parish class for other reasons, but there must be quite a number of non-Catholics who are prevented from entering the Church for the sole reason that they are living in an invalid marriage. The number of these is probably increasing and so some of the decline in conversions could be attributed to the increase in this group. It's a tragedy that something cannot be done for them, for most of them have entered the marriage situation in good faith. An American bishop once remarked wistfully that he wished he could create a new category in canon law so as to make it possible for them to enter the Church. He suggested calling it "Members in bad standing." Until such a canonical door is opened, however, there is little we can do but encourage them to persevere in faith and prayer.

ECUMENISM HELPS CONVERSIONS . . .

On the positive side, there is some indication that ecumenism is actually helping the missionary effort in America rather than proving an obstacle.

The Institute of Lay Theology at the University of San Francisco reported recently that the ecumenical climate "... has increased interest among the uncommitted in the Catholic Church. Because of the stepped-up pace of interfaith dialogue ... the unconcerned have started to examine the central Christian idea and many have found satisfaction in the renewed position of the Catholic Church." This is something that some of us have suspected all along and it is nice to know that the experience

of 67 parishes in 15 dioceses supports it.

BAPTISMS ARE 'GOOD NEWS' . . .

Theologians tell us that the sacraments are the current events of salvation history. Like everything else God has done in the history of His people, these divine interventions are good news and the people of God should hear it. Some pastors make it a point to broadcast this kind of news. A Los Angeles parish regularly announces in its bulletin, in suitable terms of joy, the names of those baptized during the week, both infants and adults. To the parish, the fact that new members have been engrafted into the Body of Christ is an important event and the parishioners want to know about it. Little details like this can help relate the liturgy to the rest of life, and their cumulative effect can give the members of the parish a greater sense of identity as God's people.

JOINT SERVICES . . .

Now that the Conciliar decree on Ecumenism has given positive encouragement to common prayer and worship, it is not unusual to hear about Catholics joining Protestants in some form of community religious activity. A couple of such occasions were reported recently in the press.

On the first Sunday of Advent Catholics and Episcopalians of Cambridge, Mass., met in a common Advent service in Christ Episcopal Church. The service consisted of hymns, Scripture readings, prayers and homilies. These last were given by two bishops, a Catholic and an Episcopalian.

Three thousand miles away another milestone of sorts was set in Redwood City, California, when a Catholic layman preached the sermon in a Protestant Church on Reformation Sunday. James F. Colaanni, lay director of the Inquiry Forum at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel parish, spoke about Christian Unity in the Woodside Village Church (United Church of Christ).

A FORUM SUGGESTION . . .

In addition to the regular Inquiry Forum, many parishes conduct a forum during the year on some topic of general interest. This is a good place to acquaint non-Catholics with the teachings and thought of the Church on matters of real relevance. For those who may be considering various subjects for discussion this year, the topic of religious liberty is a natural. The events of the recent Council session and the Protestant reaction to the fate of the schema make it very timely and the air of sus-

pense about the matter is likely to last until the fourth session. Catholics are pretty sure that the Council will come up with a ringing affirmation of religious freedom but we can understand why Protestants are worried. Any light which we can throw upon the background and ramifications of this vital matter will be a real service in the cause of Christian amity.

HOLIDAYS AS HOLYDAYS . . .

The November issue of *U.S. Catholic* carried an article challenging American Catholics to push holidays like Thanksgiving, July 4th, and Memorial Day as holydays of the Church. Lest this be branded as aggressive patriotism or anxious overidentification by a minority group, the author grounds his suggestion on missionary principles. There has been a lot of discussion about the need to adapt the Gospel message to the customs and culture of the different peoples of the earth and the new liturgy Constitution reflects this concern in an admirable way. However, it is open to wonder whether American bishops were thinking about their own country when they voted the Constitution through the Council. We talk easily of adaptation but usually in terms of Asia and Africa, although America was the native soil of the Catholic faith. The Europeans have been criticized often enough for this kind of ecclesiastical colonialism, and it might help to boost the principle of adaptation on the foreign missions if we found ways to apply it at home as well. The American holidays the article suggests, would be a good place to apply it since they reflect ideals which are not only noble in themselves, but have some real religious content as well. The present custom of special Masses on these days is a good beginning, and while we don't need more days of obligation, these important American dates deserve to be raised to some kind of liturgical importance as well.

CHRISTIAN UNITY . . .

The most powerful means to obtain unity among the followers of Christ is prayer. Every year, all over the World, from January 18 to 25, Christians are invited to pray for unity. A booklet of prayers for every day is jointly composed by the World Council of Churches and the "Centre de l'Unité chrétienne" of Lyons, France. You may obtain this booklet in English or in French as well as posters, at "Les Editions Beilamin," 8100 St. Lawrence Blvd., Montreal 11, Canada.

JOSEPH V. GALLAGHER, C.S.I.

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